Gallatin County Extension

May 2006

Gallatin Ag Report

Gallatin Beef Producers' Tour—June 14, 2006

The Gallatin Beef Producers will be holding their annual tour on Wednesday, June 14. The tour is set to begin at Taylor Park in Manhattan; the buses will leave at 9 am. Lunch will be provided. This year the tour will include the Martinell Family Ranch in Dell, Montana and a visit to the Lima dam. The tour will return to Manhattan at 6 pm where there will be a steak barbeque at the park. Cost of the tour is $15.00 (including lunch). The cost of the steak dinner will be an additional $7.00. Payment may be made at the time of the tour or to the Extension office when you call to RSVP. Make checks payable to Gallatin Beef Producers. The tour is sponsored by Gallatin Beef Producers, co-sponsored by Gallatin Valley Ag Lenders, Beaverhead County, and Gallatin County Extension. Plan to take the day off and enjoy visiting with your friends and neighbors!

Please RSVP to the Gallatin County Extension office at 582-3280, email gallatin2@montana.edu, or call Ron at 580-1303 by June 9th.

Tall larkspur study.

2005 GBP Tour Gallatin County, Sixteenmile and Maudlow pictures

Up through Eagle's Nest, near Maudlow.

Irrigated spring wheat producers may need to control head blight in 2006

From MSU News Service

Contact: Jack Riesselman, (406) 994-5149 or jhr@montana.edu, Alan Dyer (406) 994-6535 or adyer@montana.edu

For producers who have had scab problems in the past, or believe they may have, this is an excellent time to manage the disease, say Montana State University plant pathologists.

For years Montana spring wheat producers rarely had Fusarium head blight or "scab" problems, says MSU Extension's Jack Riesselman. The disease was much more common for upper Midwest grain producers. For example, in the mid-l990s North Dakota small grain producers had over $1 billion in crop losses in a single season.

Riesselman and Alan Dyer, a fellow plant pathologist, said in recent years the disease has become more of a problem in some of Montana's irrigated spring wheat. "There are a variety of reasons for the increased incidence," Dyer said, "including more summer showers the past few years, irrigating during flowering and warmer and more humid temperatures during the summer, all of which favor the disease." In addition, they said many of Montana's traditional spring wheat varieties are highly susceptible to the disease.

There are two approaches to determining whether a crop has a potential scab problem. One is a home "laboratory" test and the other relies on a grower's observation of a crop. "If last year's grain is available, growers may test for the disease," Dyer said. "Take a handful of grain and put it in a plastic bag along with a moistened paper towel. Within three to four days, infected grain will display pink to salmon colored mold. Samples with as few as 2-3 infected grains per 100 may exceed acceptable levels."

Growers can use other clues to decide whether they've had some scab, explains Riesselman. "Lower than expected test weights and yields may signal scab," he said. "If growers have noticed prematurely bleached heads or partial sterility on florets, that may indicate scab in their fields." Looking closely at such bleached florets would probably reveal a salmon colored mass of spores at the base of the floret, he added. **(article continued on back page)**

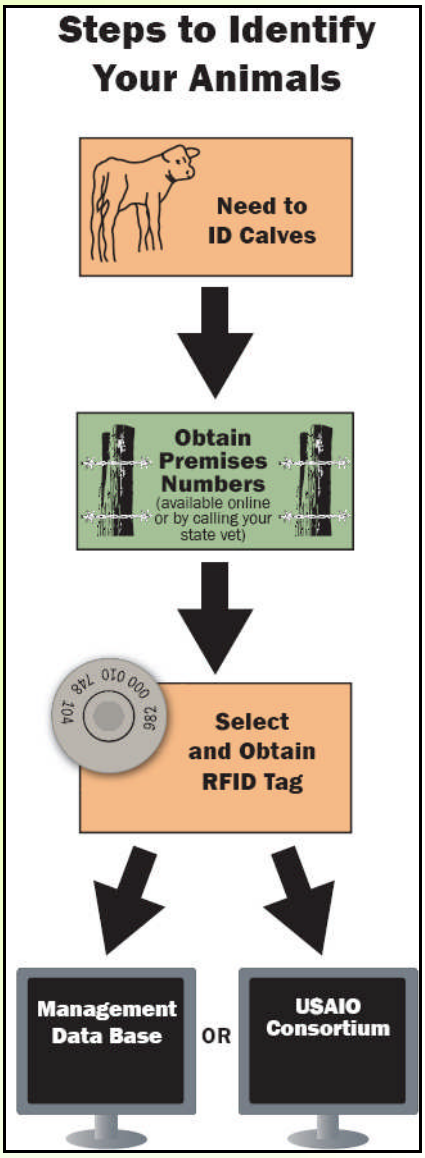
Animal ID
Questions to Ask Technology Providers

Condensed from the Western Extension Marketing Committee's "U.S. Livestock Identification Systems: Risk Management and Market Opportunities." For the full publication, go to www.lmic.info/memberspublic/pubframes.html.

There are a growing number of companies providing products and services to assist production agriculture as animal identification is introduced. The following discussion is intended to provide some questions to ask technology providers regarding their products and services.

Questions Regarding Data Collection

Q. *Does your system meet the requirements described for the National Animal Identification System?*
Q. *I have different types of animals in my livestock operation; can your products handle them all?*
Q. *What types of technology does your system support?*
Q. *Do I have to carry the computer with me when I am out in the field collecting data?*



A technology provider should have their software platforms developed to support any guidelines agreed upon by the livestock industry and the USDA in support of the National Animal ID System (NAIS). You should ask your technology provider if their software is configured to work on multiple hardware devices such as laptops, Personal Digital Assistants, tablet PCs, touch screen monitors (similar to the type utilized in the restaurant industry) or your desktop. Changes in hardware technology are very rapid, so most computer software technology providers have configured their software to work with a variety of hardware devices such as various models of EID readers, scales, barcode readers, thermometers, etc. It is very important that the technology provider with whom you choose to work supports the species (cattle, horses, swine, sheep, cervidae, etc.) on your operation. In order to facilitate the implementation of the NAIS, some of the providers will need to adapt their services to accommodate multi-species applications. The NAIS plan will start with the registration of premises and slowly phase in the individual animals. It is important that your technology provider has the software ability to capture both visual and electronic tag information.

Questions Regarding Data Storage

Q. *Where is my data stored?*
Q. *Will my data be lost?*
Q. *Can I back up my data when I am working my herd?*

Your technology provider should provide details on how your livestock data is stored and maintained. They should also be able to share information about who has access to your data, where it is stored, and how the data is backed up for safe keeping. Almost all systems store your data on your local computer, and most will also have a copy of the same data stored on a server computer that they maintain at a central location or at several locations.

In addition, the centralized databases should be backed up to a separate, offsite storage system to be used in case of a catastrophic event such as a fire, computer failure, tornado, or flood. Most systems will also contain a toolset provided to enable you to save all of your data manually or automatically as your livestock are being processed.
(continued on page 7)

Animal ID, *Questions to Ask Technology Providers* (continued from page 2)

Questions Regarding Data Security

Q. *When sending my information, will my data be exposed to hackers?*
Q. *If I upload data, who will be able to see it?*

Technology providers will need to provide an encrypted (coded) method of sending data to a safe storage facility. Therefore, your data is as safe as modern technology allows. Your technology provider will grant control to others who will have access to your data. In some systems no third party will be able to access your information without permission, while in other systems the data is transferred with ownership of the cattle. You need to know how your data is being handled and who is doing the handling.

Questions Regarding Data Access

Q. *Can I create reports of my data in the software products I have purchased?*
Q. *Can I export data collected to Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet or database applications?*
Q. *Will I be able to receive carcass information from a packing plant?*

Most software products should provide basic reporting from within their applications In addition, many technology providers have more extensive reporting capabilities accessible from their Internet portals seamlessly integrated with the front-end software product lines. As a producer, you should have the ability to export or transfer data into a spreadsheet format. Your data can be transferred to other programs and can also be printed in a hard copy format for your files. The NAIS is interested in 48-hour traceback to protect our national herd from a foreign animal disease or other catastrophic disease outbreak only. There are currently many alliances being formed that will be able to help coordinate carcass information back to the producer. Multiple technology providers will be offering tools to coordinate all types of production information (including carcass data) across all production segments, but these activities will be outside of NAIS activities. It is important to keep in mind that currently most packing plants and carcass/box operations do not have the ability to automatically coordinate live animal ID numbers to individual carcass data. The NAIS, once fully implemented, will provide some of the basic infrastructure needed for the industry to take the next step toward individual carcass data integration.

Questions Regarding Service and Support

Q. *Which types of technology do you sell, service and support?*
Q. *How can I contact your technical support?*
Q. *What type of training will you provide for me and my employees if I purchase your product?*
Q. *What do I do if I forget my password?*
Q. *Where are current installations of your software product line?*

As far as technical support, at minimum technology providers should give you a telephone number to call for assistance and their support staff 's hours of operation. You should also be sure to test the software on your operation before you make a substantial investment and begin using it to work livestock. Poor performing software makes for unnecessary costs and a long day at the chute. Your technology provider should have technical manuals to help troubleshoot and answer questions. It is important to make sure that you know where these manuals are located in the program or in a hardcopy format.

Your technology provider should also provide easy access to your passwords and give you the ability to update or change your password as you desire. Technology providers should be able to provide you with a contact list of customers who have used their software, hardware, and/or data management services. The early adopters will likely be called upon to provide advice and relay not only their experiences with service providers but also these new tools to other producers.

MNWSFF Deadline: June 5, 2006

If you are interested in becoming a Montana Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage (MNWSFF) producer or have any questions, contact the Extension office at 582-3280 or email gallatin2@montana.edu. The deadline to sign up for certification is **June 5, 2006**. For more information, visit http://agr.mt.gov/weedpest/nwsff.asp.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY | EXTENSION
Gallatin County Extension Office
901 N Black Ave.
Bozeman, MT 59715-2968

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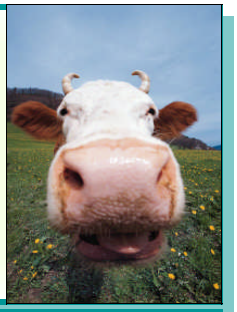

Yes, the "rumors" are true! The Gallatin County Extension office is moving to Belgrade. We expect to be moved in by July 1st, 2006. Check our website for updates on our new address and phone number. The website www.gallatinextension.com and all email addresses will remain the same as well as the County Agents cell phone numbers, with Ron Carlstrom at 580-1303. If you have any questions or would like to contact us, please email gallatin2@montana.edu.

Irrigated spring wheat producers may need to control head blight in 2006 (continued from page 1)

Not only does this disease significantly reduce yield and test weight, it also produces a toxin that can make the grain unacceptable for use. The toxin, commonly referred to as vomitoxin, is limited to one part per million in grain sold for human consumption. Limits are slightly higher in grain used for livestock feed.

The pathologists said that, for the most part, the presence of the disease in Montana has been limited to irrigated spring wheat, though irrigated barley can also have the disease. In general, two-row barley, the most common in Montana, is less susceptible to scab than six-row barley.

Since the fungus only infects the plant during flowering, producers should eliminate irrigation during the six-to eight day flowering period, Riesselman said. That would reduce the potential for infection, though its benefit can be negated if there are frequent showers during pollination.

Also, if growers have a history of scab, they may consider using a fungicide applied at the onset of flowering to further reduce the level of scab. Montana has received a Section 18 Exemption for the use of Folicur on both wheat and barley to help suppress scab. This product is also sold as Orius and TebuStar. Tilt, another fungicide is also registered, but in North Dakota tests, its level of control is slightly less than the previously mentioned products.

Some producers who have experienced recent significant losses are planting varieties with better resistance to the disease. In North Dakota, the varieties Alsen and Grandin have better resistance to scab than other commonly grown lines. Freyr, a relative new line from AgriPro has good scab tolerance and has preformed well in Montana.